PHYS 111 – Mechanics (with Lab), Fall 2013

Course meets: MWF, 9:00-9:50, Herzstein 212

Instructor: Prof. Douglas Natelson, natelson@rice.edu
Office: 301 Brockman Hall
Phone: 713-348-3214
Office Hours: Friday 2:00-4:00.

Laboratories: Prof. Stanley A. Dodds, dodds@rice.edu
Office: 215 Herzstein Hall
Phone: 713-348-2510

Main Text: Kleppner and Kolenkow, *An Introduction to Mechanics*, Cambridge University Press .

Web Page: https://owlspace-ccm.rice.edu/portal/site/PHYS-111-001-F13

General Information: This course covers content similar to PHYS 101, but the book and course assume particularly well-motivated and prepared students. We will cover some additional material, and certain topics will be explored in greater depth. There will be more of an emphasis on homework and a somewhat higher workload, and the exams will be "take-home" tests. A ***prerequisite*** for this course is knowledge of differential and integral calculus, equivalent to MAT 101 and 102, or a good score on the BC advanced placement exam. Students with a strong high school background in physics and math are encouraged to take 111, particularly if they might want to major in physics or a closely related field.

What is mechanics? Mechanics is the first course in the undergraduate physics curriculum, and serves as the foundation for the physics and astronomy majors as well as much of engineering. Concepts of "classical" mechanics include vectors, kinematics (the mathematical description of motion), dynamics (forces and Newton's laws), kinetic and potential energy, momentum, angular momentum, rotational motion, Newtonian gravity, and special relativity. Along the way you will see some multivariable calculus and some (simple) differential equations, from the physics point of view.

Homework: When there are not exams, there will be (approximately) weekly problem sets, assigned Wednesday and due the following Wednesday. These problem sets must be done ***under the Honor System***, subject to the following:

- You may discuss problems with each other, but written solutions must be your own work and not copied from any other source.
- Solutions from previous years may not be consulted.
- Homework should be turned in to the PHYS 111 drop box in Brockman Hall by 5:00 pm on the due date. Late homework will be penalized 15% per day unless excused by illness or some other instructor-approved reason. Late homework should be turned in to ***me***, not the homework boxes! Graded homework papers will be returned in class.
- Numerous resources are available for physics problem solving help online. These sites can be reasonable tools when seeking additional examples of problems or trying to learn difficult concepts. However, these sites are ***not permitted*** for use on these homework assignments or exams. We are aware of many of these sites and monitor them for PHYS 111 course content. Don't do this.
- Help sessions will take place weekly for each problem set. These are an opportunity to get together with classmates and work collaboratively to understand the material.

Actually doing problems is the way to learn this material. Your textbook provides some worked examples, and I will do some in class, but actually thinking about, setting up, and solving problems yourself is the best way to become proficient.

Exams: Exams will be open book, open your-notes, timed take-home exams. The exams will be made available via the department office in Brockman Hall during the specified exam periods. You may ***not*** collaborate with other students on the exam, or use other resources (e.g., the web). Previous years exams may not be consulted unless I place them on the course webpage. Exams are tentatively scheduled for Oct. 2 - October 9 (Wed. to Wed.), November 6 - November 13 (Wed. to Wed.), and December 9 - December 16 (Mon. to Mon.).

Laboratories: The PHYS 111 lab will be run by Prof. Dodds. It will have flexible hours and include six experiments. More information on the laboratory is available on the course website. Look under "Resources".

Grading:

Exam 1:	20%
Exam 2:	20%
Final:	25%
HW:	25%
Lab:	10%

The course is graded such that I set the *mean* overall grade at the end of the semester is at the dividing line between B and B+. If you want to think about grades on individual exams, the same is true. This is generally different than the old 90%+ = A scale. To give you a sense of the numbers, in 2012 the mean overall final grade numerically was a 79. The grade breakdown was 95+ = A+; 90-95 = A; 85-90 = A-; 79-85 = B+; 74-79 = B, etc. While these numbers are not rigid, this is very similar to what it has been for two previous years as well.

Make-ups and excused days: Make-ups for missed homeworks, exams, or laboratories will be at the discretion of the instructor. If you have university business or a conflicting class, notify us well beforehand, in writing. If you have a serious reason beyond your control (your own illness; a death in the family), notify the instructor as soon as possible in writing or by email.

Other resources: I have tried to place other books on reserve in the library. Here are brief descriptions of several alternate books and websites.

- Kittel, Knight, and Ruderman, *Mechanics (Berkeley Physics Course Vol. 1)*. This is similar to K&K. It was written in the early 1970s as part of a curriculum development effort by the University of California at Berkeley. It's out of print, but used copies are around, and it's pretty good (though dated in places).
- Feynman, Leighton, and Sands, *The Feynman Lectures on Physics, Vol. 1*. This is the first volume of the famous 3-volume set, derived from Feynman's 1st year physics course at Cal Tech. The official website is also very useful, with problems and a forum.
- Landau and Lifschitz, *Mechanics*. This is the first in one of the all-time great series of textbooks. L&L's *Mechanics* is advanced, deep, and profound, and not too expensive. Each sentence means roughly five important things.
- Serwey and Jewett, Physics for Scientists and Engineers. This is the book for PHYS 101. The book's great strength is a large number of problems with a broad distribution in difficulty. The electricity and magnetism part of this is used for PHYS 102. Look hard at the paperback version. Also, you can buy just the mechanics or E&M pieces of the book separately.
- Fishbane, Gasiorowicz, and Thornton, *Physics for Scientists and Engineers*. This is very much like S&J, with lots of example problems. Broad, not too deep.
- Halliday, Resnick, and Walker, *Fundamentals of Physics*. Also like S&J. Broad, not too deep, overpriced.
- MIT's OpenCourseware, complete with youtube videos of lectures. Good stuff.
- The Mechanical Universe. This is a series of half-hour videos made by Cal Tech back in 1985 covering this topic. They're very good.

- Physics applets. A list of links to relevant physics applets and flash animations. Good for getting some physical intuition.

Students with Disabilities: Any student with a documented disability seeking academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the instructor during the first two weeks of class. All such discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Students with disabilities are encouraged to also contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center (e-mail: adarice@rice.edu, phone: 713-348-5841) during the first two weeks of class so that timely and appropriate arrangements may be made.

Updated: July 22, 2013